

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06MANAGUA1482, HERTY,S PASSING: WILL MORE UNDECIDED VOTES PASS TO

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06MANAGUA1482**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06MANAGUA1482</a>	<a href="#">2006-07-06 22:22</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Managua</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>  
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>  
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0726  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 001482

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2026  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#)  
SUBJECT: HERTY, S PASSING: WILL MORE UNDECIDED VOTES PASS TO  
MONTEALEGRE, OR WILL ORTEGA GAIN GROUND?

REF: A. MANAGUA 1220  
[1](#)B. MANAGUA 1210

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Sandinista Renewal Movement (MRS) presidential candidate Herty Lewites, who often asserted to us that he stands between Daniel Ortega and the presidency, died suddenly of apparent natural causes on July 2 and was buried before thousands of mourners on July 5. The MRS selected Lewites' running mate Edmundo Jarquin to succeed him and singer/composer Carlos Mejia Godoy to run as Jarquin's VP. We expect that Daniel Ortega believes his chances of winning the election have significantly improved, but the new MRS ticket could give Ortega a run for the money. Lewite's passing also opens a new opportunity for Montealegre to attract more of Nicaragua's undecided/unaffiliated voters. These are additional votes he could win -- or lose. If Montealegre reaches out to the poor, women, and youth, he may attract some of Lewites' followers. However, with PLC candidate Jose Rizo's numbers rising significantly in the latest Borge poll (septel) and Montealegre's slipping, only if Montealegre recoups ground and resonates in rural areas will he clearly be the candidate best positioned to beat Ortega. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Herty Lewites, a Sandinista-dissident/presidential candidate for the MRS -- who often asserted to us that he stands between Daniel Ortega and the presidency -- died suddenly of a heart attack on July 2 and was buried on July 5 in his hometown Jinotepe. He was born December 24, 1939 and leaves behind wife Carmen "Carmencita" Garcia de Lewites and two children, Herty and Sol. Born of a Jewish immigrant father and a Nicaraguan mother and raised a Catholic, Lewites was also proud of his Jewish roots, nicknaming himself the "Jewish Tiger." President Bolanos, who attended the funeral services, called for a three-day national mourning period in honor of Lewites.

[1](#)3. (C) Conspiracy theories speculating that Lewites may have fallen victim to foul play by his FSLN competitors have already started to surface. However, at his widow's request, no autopsy was performed. Herty suffered from serious heart trouble, and although internal bleeding from minor surgery may have trigged his heart attack, we have no information that suggests his death was from unnatural causes. Indeed, according to attending physicians he had been warned not to campaign.

MUNDO JARQUIN ASSUMES HELM, CHOOSES POPULAR RUNNING MATE

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¶4. (C) The MRS selected Lewites' running mate Edmundo "Mundo" Jarquin to succeed Lewites on July 4 and invited popular revolutionary singer/composer Carlos Mejia Godoy to run as the vice presidential candidate. Mejia Godoy accepted the offer on July 5, expressing his commitment to helping carry on Herty's legacy. Jarquin explained to polcouns at the July 4 reception that Mejia enjoys the local name recognition and popular support that will complement Jarquin's technical expertise and international connections.

¶5. (SBU) Contacts, both MRS officials and others, have privately criticized Jarquin as having lived for too long outside of Nicaragua and not having the charisma that enabled Lewites to draw support from all sectors of society. Some believe that Mejia Godoy should be the presidential candidate, with Jarquin remaining in the VP position. Mejia Godoy, who had long been affiliated with the Sandinista party, wrote the current Sandinista anthem, which includes anti-U.S. lyrics. In an interview on July 6, Mejia Godoy showed no remorse for the anti-Yankee lines, commenting that "the U.S. deserves them." Mejia Godoy is enormously popular, even among many non-Sandinistas for his nationalistic music that captures the idiosyncrasies of the Nicaraguan people.

BIO: EDMUNDO JARQUIN  
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¶6. (U) Born in Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua in September, 1946, Dr. Edmundo Jarquin Calderon is a lawyer, economist, and former university professor. A firm opponent of Somoza at an early age, he served as Ambassador to Spain and Mexico during the Sandinista regime, and a National Assembly Deputy in the early 1990s. An Enrique Iglesias protege, Jarquin worked for the IDB in Spain before accepting Lewites' offer to run on his ticket. He is married to Claudia Chamorro, Violeta Chamorro's daughter.

HERTY'S FUNERAL REFLECTS HOPE AND SORROW  
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¶7. (C) Ambassador and polcouns attended Lewites' funeral, a spontaneous outpouring of popular affection and support for a man, who for many, symbolized their hopes for a more just and prosperous Nicaragua. The thousands of mourners reflected the groups most drawn to Herty: youth, women, the poor, artists, and intellectuals -- vital segments of Nicaragua's voter population. Common-folk and MRS leaders, including Jarquin, approached the Ambassador to express appreciation for his presence. While ALN candidate Eduardo Montealegre, his vice presidential candidate Fabricio Cajina and a number of other Montealegre supporters attended, neither Rizo nor Ortega were present, although the FSLN announced it had suspended a number of activities out of respect for Lewites. At the close of the funeral, Jarquin assured mourners that, like Herty, he does not seek power. Rather, he will break the nefarious Ortega-Aleman pact and implement Herty's social project, an effort that puts first and foremost the welfare and happiness of all Nicaraguans, regardless of political affiliation.

COMMENT -- WHAT NEXT?  
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¶8. (C) Whether Jarquin, Martinez Cuenca, Ramirez, or any other candidate can fill Herty's shoes is questionable, as his charisma was the drawing card of the MRS coalition. It is also unclear whether Jarquin will be able to attract financial backing. Lewites drew heavily on support from the Jewish financiers, an advantage Jarquin does not enjoy. Without the coattails of Herty's charisma, the chances of the MRS capturing a significant number of legislative seats may also diminish, making it more difficult to break the Ortega-Aleman "Pacto" alliance in the National Assembly. While Mejia's addition to the MRS ticket may draw more votes from Ortega, his apparent anti-U.S. stance could complicate

relations with the USG and scare away non-Sandinista voters, who may decide that Montealegre is a safer bet.

¶9. (C) We expect that Daniel Ortega and his supporters are relieved that Herty is no longer part of the political competition and that they believe Ortega's chances of winning the election have significantly improved. Indeed, a bump in the polls in favor of Ortega has occurred and Ortega's numbers appear to have crossed the 30% threshold. Although we are likely to see Ortega attempt rapprochement with his "Sandinista comrades" in the MRS, the lack of FSLN presence at the funeral does not bode well for reconciliation between the FSLN and MRS. Further, the new MRS ticket could give Ortega a run for the money, as the Jarquin-Godoy combination may attract more, not fewer, Sandinista voters. Moreover, Ortega's rise in the polls could prompt the unintentional consequence of scaring more undecided/unaffiliated voters, who are largely anti-Ortega, to back the candidate best poised to beat him. Clearly, a high abstention rate would favor Ortega, while higher voter turnout would work against him.

¶10. (C) Lewites' passing also opens a new opportunity for Montealegre to attract more of Nicaragua's undecided or unaffiliated voters. These are additional votes he could win -- or lose. Jarquin will not be an easy competitor, as he appears more habile than Montealegre with the media, and, like Montealegre, is versant in economic matters. If Montealegre improves his outreach to, and resonance among, the poor, women, and youth, he may attract some of Lewites' followers, although many are certain to remain loyal to Lewite's successor.

¶11. (C) Montealegre faces an additional challenge. While he was grappling with his alliance's interpersonal and partisan conflicts over the past two months, Rizo was actively campaigning, especially in the PLC's stronghold - Nicaragua's rural areas. Rizo's efforts seem to have paid off: his numbers rose significantly in the latest Borge poll (septel). Only if Montealegre recoups ground and starts to resonate in rural areas will he clearly be the best candidate to beat Ortega. And only then will Rizo be pressed to withdraw from the race and support Montealegre. Montealegre's rural running mate may be the key to attracting the rural vote, but he must move soon to make a dent into the PLC vote there.

¶12. (C) Ambassador will meet on July 7 with Montealegre and IRI'S Gilberto Valdez to drive home the need for Montealegre to act now and to discuss how to unify his disparate, unfocused alliance. Ambassador will also meet with MRS candidate Jarquin. END COMMENT  
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